

New Insight into the Origins of Adam Brouwer

By Chris Chester

*Thanks to William B. Bogardus and Prof. Willem Frijhoff, who both must be given the lion's share of credit for the observations and theories which are presented in this article. Also to Richard Brewer for his advise and suggestions.*¹

Adam Brouwer, often referred to as Adam Brouwer Berckhoven, was a soldier of the Dutch West India Co., a resident of New Amsterdam by 1642, the owner and operator of the first grist mill in New Netherlands located at Gowanus, Long Island, and the ancestor of countless descendants both deceased and living today who bear the name Brouwer, Brower or Brewer. His own ancestry, however, is as yet unknown, and the long lingering questions, as to his correct place of birth, whether it is Cologne or *Berckhoven*, and of his ancestry, whether it is Dutch or German, have never been clearly settled.

Adam Brouwer has been falsely attributed, by some, with two different sets of parents, neither of which is supported by documentation or reason. One set is claimed to be Frans Sijmonsens Brouwer and his wife Caatje, the other set, Pieter Clementszen Brouwer and his wife Helena Mey (sometimes stated as Rachel, depending on the errant claim considered). Although the identification of either of these sets of parents for Adam has never been published in any professionally recognized genealogical journal, both have been claimed in all too many genealogies posted to the internet, at personal family pages, sponsored sites such as Ancestry.com, and in the various databases maintained by the Family History Library, namely Personal Resource File, Ancestral File, and the International Genealogical Index (IGI). As will be seen, there is no basis for claiming either of the two sets of parents as Adam Brouwer's, and it is clear that the only thing Adam has in common with the two is the surname, Brouwer. The claim for either of the two Brouwer families as Adam's parents overlooks and ignores the historic data on

¹ Chris Chester, 1404 Bills Rd., Kent, NY 14477, chrischester101@hotmail.com. William Brower Bogardus, of Willmington, Ohio, author of *Dear "Cousin": A Charted Genealogy of the Descendants of Anneke Jans Bogardus (1605-1663) to the 5th Generation*, is the recognized authority on the descendants of Anneke Jans Bogardus and is no less an authority on the various Brouwer, Brower, and Brewer families of the 17th and 18th centuries, having spent more than thirty-five years collecting data regarding numerous Brouwer families, and is a descendant of Adam Brouwer. Willem Th. M. Frijhoff is Honorary Professor of Early Modern History at VU-University (Free University), Amsterdam, former dean of the Arts faculty, and former chairman of the Humanities and Social Sciences Division of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences. He is author of *Dutch Culture in a European Perspective 1: 1650: Hard Won Unity* (2005), and *Fulfilling God's Mission: The Two Worlds of Domine Everardus Bogardus, 1607-1647* (2007), which was awarded the 2008 Hendricks Manuscript Award by the New Netherland Institute, and has authored numerous other publications. Prof. Frijhoff was recently knighted, the honor being presented by the Rector of the Free University. Between 1993 and 1997 the two corresponded by letters, regarding the subject of the possible ancestry of Adam Brouwer. They were kind enough to allow me access to their letters, which have largely inspired this article. Richard Brewer, Ph.D., of Bend, Oregon, is co-administrator of the Brewer DNA Project, www.familytreedna.com/public/BrewerDNA/. He was lead author of "DNA Analysis: Adam Brouwer Berckhoven, Elias Brouwer of New Jersey, and John Brewer of Ohio," *New York Genealogical and Biographical Record* 138 (2007): 245-249. Richard is a descendant of Jan Brouwer of Flatlands, L.I.

Adam's life. They appear to be based on nothing more than wishful thinking. The clues to Adam Brouwer's ancestry are found with Adam himself and with the type of life he led, both of which can be constructed from the records he left behind. Rather than arbitrarily assign a set of parents to Adam, we will allow Adam's story to point us in the direction of where we might find his parents. To do this we need to first identify Adam Brouwer, then see if there is any reason to suspect the two sets of above mentioned parents as Adam's, and third we must put to rest the question of *Berckhoven*. Once done, we will have a starting place from which to search for Adam Brouwer's origins.

IDENTIFYING ADAM BROUWER

The first task to accomplish in attempting to find Adam Brouwer's parents is to establish a clear and accurate picture of just who Adam Brouwer was. The only way to do that is to consult the records he left behind, while paying attention to interpreting them within the context of the time and place in which he lived.

On 19 March 1645, the marriage banns of "Adam Brouwer, j.m. Van Ceülen, en Magdalena Verdon, j.d. Van N. Nederlt." were registered at the Reformed Dutch Church in New Amsterdam.² In the convention and custom of the day in both the Netherlands and New Netherlands, "van Ceülen" meant that Adam was *born* in Ceülen. Ceülen is the German City, Cologne, which lies on the River Rhine. In most circumstances the direct meaning of the Dutch, *van* is *from*. However, in the context of the marriage register of the Reformed Dutch Church in the 17th century, the implication was *born*. It is this way with the other marriages recorded by the Church, and there is no reason to believe or assume that Adam's record was any different. Adam Brouwer was born in Cologne. His wife Magdalena Verdon, was born in New Netherlands.

Just prior to his marriage, on 21 February 1645, Adam Brouwer gave Power of Attorney to Guert Servaeszen to collect wages due him from the Dutch West India Company (WIC) for his service as a soldier at Fort St. Louis de Marinhán, Brazil. On 21 September 1646, Adam Brouwer again gave Power of Attorney, this time to Govert Loockermans, for him to collect Adam's wages from the WIC.³ It is apparent from these entries that immediately prior to his arrival in New Amsterdam; Adam was employed as a soldier by the WIC, and was stationed in Brazil. Had the *van* in his marriage record been intended to describe where Adam last came from, it would have read, "van Brasil."

² Samuel S. Purple, *Records of the Reformed Dutch Church in New Amsterdam and New York, Marriages from 11 December 1639 to 26 August 1801* (Bowie, Md.: Heritage Books, 2003, original New York: NYG&BS, 1890), p.13.

³ Arnold J. F. Van Laer, *New York Historical Manuscripts: Dutch, Vol. II, Register of the Provincial Secretary, 1642-1647* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1974), pp.290-2 [141a, 141b], pp.341-2 [149j]. It is probable that Adam was asking for the same wages to be collected twice, which would assume that Guert Servaeszen failed to collect in 1645. Prof. Frijhoff relates that the "WIC was a notoriously bad payer; people had to ask repeatedly for money due." Among those who never received money due them from the WIC were Dom. Everardus Bogardus, his mother-in-law, Tryntje Jonas, and surgeon Hans Kierstede.

In September 1687, Adam Brouwer took the Oath of Allegiance to the Crown as a resident of *Breucklijn* in Kings County.⁴ With this he stated he had been living in the Colony for 45 years. This places Adam's arrival in New Netherlands at 1642. From the above records, his marriage in 1645, his arrival in New Netherlands in 1642, and his service for a time prior to 1642 with the Dutch West India Co., we can estimate that Adam Brouwer was likely to be a man in his mid-twenties, therefore probably born around 1620.⁵ Adam's wife, Magdalena Verdon, had the last of her fourteen (confirmed) children, son Nicholas, baptized in April 1672. Assuming Nicholas' baptism was not delayed (children were customarily baptized within a few weeks of their birth), and after fourteen children, it is reasonable to assume that Magdalena was in her mid to late forties when Nicholas was born. If she was therefore aged about 45 in 1672, it would place her birth at about 1627 (also implying that she was married at age 18, which would be customary). An approximately seven year difference in age for a man and woman, each married for the first time, would not be unreasonable for their time and place. Adam died between 22 January 1692 (the date of his will) and 21 March 1692 (the date it was proved) and if born in 1620 he would have had a life span of 72 years and would have lived a longer life than most of his contemporaries. It is reasonable to conclude that Adam was born in or about 1620.

Adam Brouwer lived, for practically all of his adult life, in New Amsterdam and at Gowanus (within Brooklyn) in a community that is generally thought of as Dutch, or at least dominated by Dutch persons and customs. The Reformed Dutch Church was the dominant religion, Adam was married in this church, and his children, at least those for whom baptism records exist, were baptized there. It has, by most Brouwer researchers in the past, been assumed that Adam Brouwer was Dutch. However, this may not be the case, and a closer look at Adam leaves reason to question this assumption.

- It has already been established that Adam was born in Cologne, and Cologne is a German city. Still, there were people of other nationalities living in Cologne, even if just for a short time. Although being born in Cologne would more likely mean Adam was German, the possibility still exists that he may have been born to a Dutch family living there. Simply being born in Cologne is inconclusive, so we will look at additional evidence.
- Before arriving at New Amsterdam, Adam was a soldier in the service of the Dutch West India Co. Willem Frijhoff, Hon. Prof. of Early Modern History at V.U. (Free University) Amsterdam states that many soldiers recruited for the Dutch army, at this time, were Germans. In fact, among Adam's closest associates are found others of German ancestry who were soldiers in the service of the Dutch. Willem Bredembent, also born in Cologne, witnessed the conveyance by which Adam bought his first home lot in New Amsterdam in 1645⁶, and then

⁴ Edmund Bailey O'Callaghan, *Lists of Inhabitants of Colonial New York, Excerpted from The Documentary History of the State of New York* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1999), p.38.

⁵ It is not known how long Adam Brouwer served as a soldier for the WIC. The WIC records of that time no longer exist and unfortunately can not be consulted.

⁶ Arnold J. F. Van Laer, *New York Historical Manuscripts: Dutch, Vol. II* (see note 2), p.292 (no.141c).

stood as sponsor for the baptism of Adam's eldest son, Pieter in 1646⁷. Ulderick Kleyn (or Cliene), a soldier, born in Hesse, was this same Pieter's father-in-law. Adam may have been another German, serving in the Dutch army. This too is just suggestive, and the question is still unresolved.

- An important clue is found in the name, or rather what is missing from the name that Adam used or was referred to by during his lifetime. In 17th century Netherlands, and New Netherlands the patronymic tradition for naming was the standard for persons of Dutch or Scandinavian ancestry. As you look through the records of this time, whether they are church records or civil records, you will find individuals identified in the patronymic style the majority of the time. Looking through a roster of Adam's contemporaries, you will find his Dutch and Scandinavian neighbors all being referred to by their patronymic between the years 1645 and about 1700. Their descendants would then settle upon a surname often different from the patronymic but one that we identify the family by today. Hans Bergen is always recorded as Hans Hansen, or Hans Hansen Bergen (or Hans Hansen de Noorman for that matter); Pieter van Kouwenhoven is always Pieter Wolphertsz, or Pieter Wolphertsz van Kouwenhoven; Olof Van Courtlandt is always Olof Stephenszen, or Olof Stephenszen van Courtlandt; the examples would go on and on. Adam Brouwer, however, is *never* recorded in the patronymic style. Not only is the absence of his name appearing in any record with his patronymic a handicap in determining who his father was, it also implies that he was not Dutch (or Scandinavian). In every instance in which he is mentioned, Adam is always recorded as simply, Adam Brouwer. Adam's name never appears in the patronymic style. Prof. Willem Frijhoff has related that, "Germans distinguished themselves from the Dutch by using simple family names instead of patronymics," and regards this as an argument in favor of German origins over Dutch. Adam's children are, on some occasions, recorded in the patronymic style. There exists records for Pieter Adamsz, Feytjen Adamse, Adam Adamszen, and Abraham Adamsz, as well as Aeltje Adolphi (but more on that later). Although his children, who were born in a Dutch dominated community, adopted the Dutch system to a degree, it appears that Adam, who was not born in such a community, never did. This evidence points to a German, rather than Dutch ancestry for Adam Brouwer.
- Adam's surname, *Brouwer*, also needs to be considered. *Brouwer* is an occupational surname; translation, *brewer*, but Adam *Brouwer* never operated a brewery. As a comparison, Pieter Lassen, during the period in which he operated a brewery in New Amsterdam, was recorded as *Pieter Lassen Brouwer*. His daughter Maria is recorded as *Maria Lassen y.d. of Pieter Lassen Brouwer* in her marriage record.⁸ After he ceased brewing at New Amsterdam and lived in "the Highlands," Pieter's name reverted to being recorded simply as *Pieter Lassen*. Adam is always called *Brouwer*, yet there is no record to indicate that he ever operated or owned a brewery. He certainly had not yet been a brewer in 1641,

⁷ "Records of the Reformed Dutch Church in New York," *New York Genealogical and Biographical Record*, Vol.5, p.88.

⁸ "Some Early Records of the Lutheran Church, New York," *Yearbook of the Holland Society*, 1903, pp.4 & 10.

when as a young man and soldier he is still called *Brouwer*. Adam's surname of *Brouwer* could only been assumed if it had been passed down from one generation to the next, as in the German tradition of naming. Had he been Dutch, and having been born in the earlier part of the 17th century, Adam would have been identified using the patronymic system, and his *Brouwer* surname would have been lost with his father's generation or before. It once again appears to be likely that Adam Brouwer was German.

- Among Adam's descendants is a repeated use of the given name Adolph as an apparent substitute for the name Adam. Adam Brouwer's son and namesake, Adam is himself, in some records, referred to as Adolph, and in one, as Adolph, *Junior*.⁹ In the 1691 baptism record of her daughter Catharyn, Adam's daughter, Aeltje Brouwer, (using the patronymic) is recorded as *Aeltje Adolfs*.¹⁰ William J. Hoffman came to the conclusion that in this Brouwer family, Adolph was synonymous with Adam.¹¹ Prof. Frijhoff again sheds some more light stating, "*Adolph* really is a German form, Dutch people would rather say *Alof*; compare *Roelof* (Dutch) for *Rudolph* (German). All this points to a German origin."

From the above evidence, it appears that Adam was most likely of German ancestry, and was not Dutch. Having established that Adam was very likely of German ancestry, it will also help to establish the social and economic class into which he was born. In every document on which Adam's signature was required, he signed with his mark, *AB*. Adam Brouwer could not sign his name, and in other words, he was illiterate. The first known records pertaining to Adam Brouwer are mentioned above. They describe him as a former soldier in the employ of the WIC. The Dutch Army did often recruit for its ranks from among Germans, and they tended to be from the lower classes. For these young German men, enlisting as a soldier may have been their only opportunity to earn a living. If Adam was a member of a more well to do family, say one of the merchant classes, as will be described below, his family would have certainly not allowed him to enlist as an ordinary soldier. He more likely would have joined as a commissioned officer with the possibilities of future promotion. We infer, therefore that Adam Brouwer was from a lower social class and arrived at New Amsterdam in 1642, without economic advantage.

THE SEARCH FOR FRANS SIJMONSEN BROUWER AND PIETER CLEMENTSZ. BROUWER

Frans Sijmonsens Brouwer and his wife Caatje are claimed by some as parents of Adam Brouwer. It will be shown that there is no justification for this claim. The International Genealogical Index (IGI) has roughly twenty-four entries of a Frans Sijmonsens Brouwer,

⁹ David William Voorhees, *Records of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church of Flatbush, Kings County, New York, Vol. 1, 1677-1720* (New York: Holland Society, 1998), p.433. Adolf Brouwer de Jonge appears as a sponsor for the baptism of Jannetje, daughter of Evert Hendricksen and Fytie Brouwer.

¹⁰ "Records of the Reformed Dutch Church in New York," *New York Genealogical and Biographical Record*, Vol.13, p.29.

¹¹ William J. Hoffman, "Brouwer Beginnings, The First Three Generations of the Adam Brouwer Berchoven Family," *The American Genealogist*, Vol. 23 & 24 (1947-48), specifically 24:163. Here Hoffman discusses the use of Adam and Adolph as interchangeable in this particular family.

born 1596 in Katwijk-In-Kew, Zuid Holland.¹² Some of the entries record in his family children named Arij and Leendert, with one record claiming their baptisms at Katwijk-In-Kew, but in another, at the New York Reformed Dutch Church in 1622 and 1624. One record adds a daughter Annatje, baptized in 1623 at New York, and a few records add a son Adam, baptized 18 Jan 1621, with three of the baptism records placing Adam's baptism in Katwijk, and another at Cologne. It is clear that, from the lack of consistency in these accounts of Frans Brouwer's family, the fact that the New York Dutch Church did not exist in 1622 or 1624, and the fact that there is no indication, in any record regarding *our* Adam Brouwer, that would lead us to believe that his origins were in Katwijk, these records found in the IGI regarding Frans Brouwer obviously should not be trusted. Not only are none of the given names associated with this family (Simon, Frans, Caatje, Arij or Leendert) found in Adam Brouwer's family, either among his children or grandchildren, but the names Simon, Frans, and Leendert do not appear in any Brouwer family in New Amsterdam or New York prior to 1750. Nothing else has been found that would give a clue as to who Frans Sijmonsens Brouwer was. There is not one entry in the entire index of the *New York Genealogical & Biographical Record (Record)* for a Frans Brouwer. A search of the New England Historic Genealogical Society's website, containing an extensive list of resources, as well as a search of their online library catalog, found no reference to a Frans Brouwer.¹³ Of those who have published accounts of Adam Brouwer, and other early New Netherlands Brouwer families (Bergen, Totten, Hoffman for example) none have ever so much as mentioned a Frans Brouwer.¹⁴ The only explanation for the claim that Frans Sijmonsens Brouwer is a father of Adam Brouwer, would be that someone, in an attempt to claim some parentage for Adam, searched the IGI and found, then chose Frans Sijmonsens Brouwer based on their common surname. There is no other link between Frans Brouwer and Adam Brouwer. Unfortunately, once this fallacy was claimed by one person, the "cut and paste" world of internet genealogy quickly spread the error. There are no less than seventy user submitted databases at the Ancestry World Tree Project which claim Frans Brouwer and Caatje as parents of Adam Brouwer (with some "citing" another user submitted database as their

¹² Internet search for *Frans Brouwer* in the online version of the International Genealogical Index (IGI) at www.familysearch.org, retrieved June 1, 2008. It must also be noted that a location exactly named "Katwijk in Kew," does not exist. There does exist in South Holland a place called Katwijk aan Zee (Katwijk on the sea) and a neighboring village of Katwijk aan de Rijn (Katwijk on the Rhine) "with the two forming two nuclei of the same community near Leiden" (W. Th. M. Frijhoff). Perhaps Katwijk in Kew is a mistranslation of Katwijk aan Zee.

¹³ New England Historic Genealogical Society online at www.newenglandancestors.org

¹⁴ Here I am referring to Teunis G. Bergen's, "Contributions to the History of the Early Settlers of Kings County," John Reynolds Totten's, "Brouwer (Brower-Brewer) Family Notes," *Record* 67 (1936):103-110, 217-229; and William J. Hoffman's, "Brouwer Beginnings" (see note 9), as well as his, "Brouwer Corrections," *Record* 69 (1938): 172-179, and "Brouwer Notes No. II," *Record* 72 (1941). Bergen's work which is the earliest, has errors regarding the Brouwer family, although to his credit he does not make the error of fishing for Adam Brouwer's ancestry. Totten's work comes next; it corrects some of Bergen, but introduces errors of its own. Hoffman's three Brouwer articles correct all prior errors, and should be the place for anyone new to researching Adam Brouwer's family, to start. Hoffman does make a few incorrect assumptions, and as his "Brouwer Beginnings," was published sixty years ago, it is time for a new look at Adam Brouwer's family.

source).¹⁵ *There are no facts or evidence to justify the claim that Frans Sijmonszen Brouwer and his wife Caatje are parents of Adam Brouwer.*

Two records in the IGI claim Pieter Clementsz. Brouwer and Helena Mey as parents of Adam Brouwer. The Ancestry World Tree Project has twelve databases that make this claim.¹⁶ In addition there are some early, pre-internet, mentions of Pieter Clementsz. Brouwer. Dingman Versteeg, in *Manhattan in 1628*, gives a short mention to Pieter Clementssen Brouwer on page 134. He is listed with Jan Clementssen Kies and Cornelis Volckertssen, all merchants of the City of Hoorn, as owners of the ship *Fortune*, Cornelis Jacobssen May, skipper.¹⁷ An undated pamphlet titled, "Outline Genealogy of Lorenzo D. Brewer of Hunterdon Co., N.J." makes the assertion that Pieter Clementson Brouwer, was a director of the Dutch West India Company in 1614, and makes note of his ownership in the ship *Fortuyn*. The pamphlet does not link Pieter Clementson Brouwer to Adam Brouwer.¹⁸ A manuscript titled, "Brewer Family Holland-America," found at the Francis Vigo Chapter of the National Society of the D.A.R., Vincennes, Indiana, does make the claim that Pieter Clementszen Brouwer and *Rachel* Mey were parents of Adam Brouwer.¹⁹ The manuscript claims Pieter Clementszen Brouwer to be the *first* "Director-General" of the WIC, and to be a son of a Niclaas Brouwer-Berckhoven (b.ca.1557, d. ca. 1615, Hoorn) and Sophia Helena Kiees, daughter of Pieter Clementszen Kiess. This Niclass Brouwer is in turn stated to be a son of an Arent Brouwer, Burgomaster, who died about 1575 in Amsterdam. The "genealogy" then proceeds to combine a number of known, but unrelated, 17th century Brouwers, into one family headed by Niclaas Brouwer-Berkhoven and Sophia Kiess.²⁰ The first error here is in the claim that Pieter

¹⁵ Online search conducted June 1, 2008 at www.ancestry.com, "Family Trees" tab.

¹⁶ Both searches conducted June 1, 2008. (See notes 4 and 5).

¹⁷ Dingman Versteeg, *Manhattan in 1628* (New York: Dodd Mead and Co., 1904), pp.29-33 discuss some possible Brouwer family connections, all just theories, and all stated by the author to be unverifiable, while p.134 mentions Pieter Clementssen Brouwer in regard to matters of commerce. It is noted that in his discussions on pp.29-33, Versteeg never mentions Pieter Clementssen Brouwer.

¹⁸ "Outline Genealogy of Lorenzo D. Brewer of Hunterdon Co., N.J.," undated, the author not identified. A copy in the possession of William B. Bogardus was provided to me in May, 2008. The pamphlet does not claim Pieter Clementsz. Brouwer as a father of Adam, however, it does erroneously assert that Adam Brouwer, Johannes Brouwer (more commonly known as Jan Brouwer of Flatlands) and Wilhelmus Brouwer (the Willem Brouwer whose descendants were early settlers at Schenectady) were brothers. This is an assertion that has definitely been proven to be false by recent DNA test results from known descendants (see note 23). Lorenzo D. Brewer was himself, a descendant of Jan Brouwer of Flatlands, was born 8 May 1822, and in 1880 was living in Kingwood, Hunterdon Co., New Jersey (U.S. Federal Census). It is reasonable to suspect that the pamphlet was written by one of his sons, probably in the early decades of the 1900's.

¹⁹ Silas Herbert Brewer and Samuel Scott Brewer, "Brewer Family Holland-America", undated. Compiled by Georgia P. Willis; written and arranged by Pauline Brady, Newspaper Editor and Writer; and presented for publication Nov. 18, 1981. A copy of pp.64-69, 87-93 obtained from William B. Bogardus in May, 2008. He had obtained his copy from the Francis Virgo Chapter of the National Society of the D.A.R., P.O. Box 355, Vincennes, IN 47591. Whether or not it was actually published is not known.

²⁰ The family consists of Pieter Clementzen Brouwer, b.1580, m. Rachel Mey; Marritie Brouwer, b. 1583, m. Cornelis Volkertszen, merchant of Hoorn; Sarah Brouwer, b. 1585, m. Thy Volkertszen of Amsterdam, brother of Cornelis of Hoorn; Jan Jansen Brouwer, b. 1590, later a "Member of the Council of New Amsterdam under Gov. Pieter Minuet;" Annetje Brouwer, b. 1593, m. Lambrecht van Tween-Huysen, merchant of Amsterdam. No reason or authority is given for the appearance of this family, and it is clear,

Clementszen Brouwer is a son of Niclaas Brouwer. The patronymic system of naming, practiced in the Netherlands through the 16th and 17th centuries, would tell us that by definition, Pieter *Clementszen* Brouwer must be a son of a man named *Clement*. Pieter Clementszen Brouwer can not be the son of a man named Niclaas Brouwer²¹. In 1993, with the above two documents in hand, William B. Bogardus contacted Prof. Willem Frijhoff, then with Erasmus University in Rotterdam for assistance in verifying the existence of Pieter Clementszen Brouwer and Nicholas Brouwer and the possibility that they may be Adam Brouwer's ancestors. The two corresponded with a series of letters and personal meetings between July 1993 and October 1997. After looking over the manuscripts and checking with sources of his own, Prof. Frijhoff conveyed the following with regards to Pieter Clementszen Brouwer: (1) He cannot be a son of Niclaas Brouwer because of the conflict with the patronymic name (as mentioned above). (2) The WIC was not organized in 1614, but in 1621, and the claim that Pieter Clementszen Brouwer was its *first Director-General* is, "simply not true." Pieter Clementszen Brouwer was found to be a shareholder in the 1614 New Netherland Company, and "perhaps in the new 1621/23 West India Company, that is all. He is not even on the long list of Company directors published as early as 1644 by Johan de Laet. I wonder whether this is family mythology. Or simple invention?"²² (3) The manuscripts offer no proof to their claims and, "I would reject all this as pure mythology." In addition, in late 1989, William Bogardus corresponded with the Gemeentelijke Achiefdienst Amsterdam, sending them a copy of the manuscript found at the Francis Vigo Chapter of the D.A.R., and asked for their comments. The reply received in February 1990 stated that no baptism records or a marriage record for Nicolaas Brouwer and Sophia Kiess could be found, and that Arent Brouwer and Nicolaas Brouwer "are not known as owners of flour mills in the second half of the 16th century." The same manuscript was sent to the Archiefdienst Westfriesche Gemeenten at Hoorn by William Bogardus, and the reply, "Several times before we received questions about the 'BROUWER genealogy.' Most of the dates and facts, mentioned in these letters, were indeed obviously incorrect." One other observation has to be mentioned, this regarding social and economic standing. As pointed out above, Adam Brouwer was, from all appearances, born into a lower social and economic class. He could not sign his name. He was recruited as a soldier as a young man. He also came to New Netherlands in 1641 with apparently little money and no family backing. When he needed a partner to start up a grist mill business, he turned to local burgher, Isaac de Foreest, and not to family members back in Europe. The family and ancestry of Pieter Clementsz. Brouwer, as described, even though certainly inaccurate in many details, is that of a wealthy merchant class family, one that would certainly have given a son enough education so that he might be able to write his name, and one that most certainly would not have had a son enlist as a soldier to be deployed in Brazil. It can only be

even at first glance, that this fictional family was cobbled together based upon nothing but a common surname.

²¹ The "Brewer Family, Holland-America," also lists a Jan *Jansen* Brouwer as a son of this same *Nicholas* Brouwer. It is clear that the compiler of this "genealogy" was completely unaware of the patronymic system of naming prevalent in 16th and 17th century Netherlands.

²² Prof. Frijhoff has also searched the index of the 1602 shareholders of the *East India Company*, published by J. G. Van Dillen in 1958. The index contains the names of "virtually all Amsterdammers eager to invest their money in a colonial enterprise." No individual with the name Brouwer, or with any of the patronymics mentioned, were listed.

concluded that Adam Brouwer is not a child of Pieter Clementsz. Brouwer and Helena/Rachel Mey.

RETHINKING *BERCKHOVEN*

Historically, in the published literature, Adam Brouwer is often referred to as *Adam Brouwer Berckhoven*. A recent article published in the October 2007 issue of the *Record* calls him just that.²³ William J. Hoffman, in his “Brouwer Beginnings” articles noted, “The name of this family was probably Berchoven, and Brouwer (brewer) possibly originally an occupational indication.”²⁴ From Hoffman’s statement, it has been taken by all since, that Adam Brouwer’s original name was Berckhoven, and that Berckhoven, said to be a village near Hoorn in North Holland is possibly the ancestral home of Adam Brouwer.²⁵ It is this possible assumption that Adam was born in Berckhoven, near Hoorn, that may have led some to link Adam to the Pieter Clementsz. Brouwer “family” above, as they were, claimed by some, to be from Hoorn. However, a more careful examination of the available records, and the insight of Prof. Willem Frijhoff can only lead to the conclusion that William Hoffman was incorrect in his assumption, and therefore searching for Adam’s ancestry in the area in and around Hoorn would be misguided. Adam Brouwer appears in numerous records in New Netherlands and New York between 1645 and 1692. He appears in records of the courts involving grants and patents, as well as legal disputes as both a plaintiff and defendant. He appears in the records of the Dutch Churches at both New Amsterdam/New York and at Brooklyn and Flatbush, as a parent and as a sponsor at baptisms, and in an episode when he was censured. *In none of these records does Adam appear with, or is recorded with the name Berckhoven.* The name *Berckhoven* as applied to Adam is only found for the very *first* time in the very *last* document associated with Adam. That is, his will. In his will, written 22 January 1692, Adam, for the first time, refers to himself as *Adam Brouwer Berckhoven*. Adam is the one who first uses the name *Berckhoven*. Hoffman points out that a few of Adam’s children are recorded with the Berckhoven name. This is correct; however, these records appear after Adam’s will is written, and for only a short period of a few years. On 6 February 1692, son Abraham Adams *Bercko* is married. On 15 September 1692, son Nicolaes *Berckhoven* is married. Adam’s daughter Anna is married as Antje *Berkove* on 6 April 1693, and is called *Berckhoven* at her daughter Sara’s baptism on 9 April 1693. Daughter, Rachel, was married on 5 June 1698 as Rachel *Berckhoven*. The Berckhoven name then disappears and is not carried on by later generations. Prof. Willem Frijhoff supplies the simple, but profound, explanation for this, and it is an explanation that has eluded all

²³ Richard D. Brewer, Scott Krauss and William B. Bogardus, “DNA Analysis: Adam Brouwer Berckhoven, Elias Brouwer of New Jersey, and John Brewer of Ohio,” *New York Genealogical and Biographical Record*, Vol. 138 (2007) pp.245-249.

²⁴ William J. Hoffman, “Brouwer Beginnings, The First Three Generations of the Adam Brouwer Berchoven Family,” *The American Genealogist*, Vol. 23 & 24 (1947-48). The referenced quote found at 23:194. This work is to date the latest and most comprehensive and accurate account of Adam Brouwer’s family. It is, however, in need of expansion and updating, an endeavor that the author of this article is currently engaged in.

²⁵ Prof. Frijhoff, in disagreement with William Hoffman’s assumption explains, “I wonder how one came to think about this. The village near Hoorn is not named Berckhoven but Berkhout (birch wood), which etymologically is not at all the same. Another case of false suggestion!”

other Adam Brouwer family researchers to this date. Adam Brouwer was not from Berckhoven, and his ancestors were not from Berckhoven. He most likely had ancestors who were brewers, as accounted for by the Brouwer surname, but they did not come from Berckhoven. Adam Brouwer was born in Cologne. That is clear from the marriage register at the New Amsterdam Dutch Church. Berckhoven (or “place of birches”) is only mentioned at the end of Adam’s life, by Adam, and therefore clearly refers to the location where Adam was *at that time*. That location, called *Berckhoven*, was the place that Adam himself created. Adam Brouwer’s beginnings were humble. He was illiterate. His first opportunity came as a recruit into the Dutch Army. He had little means upon arriving at New Amsterdam. Yet he did manage to build and operate the first grist mill in New Netherlands. He did provide for a large family, fourteen children reached adulthood, and they were left a thriving business and property that could be (and was by sons Abraham and Nicholas) expanded upon. Adam Brouwer came a long way. *Berckhoven* was the name he gave to his achievements.²⁶ He had built a property, a business, and a family he could give a name to. Perhaps it was a name he hoped his descendants would take for themselves, a way to separate themselves from other families named Brouwer. Hoffman, in 1947, believed that *Berckhoven* was a clue to Adams origins. Others have used this to assume that his ancestry is found near Hoorn. However, *Berckhoven* does not point towards a beginning for Adam, it describes an ending achievement. We can not know why Adam chose this name, but it is apparent that Adam Brouwer did not start at *Berckhoven*, he finished there.

CONCLUSION

From the records he left behind, Adam Brouwer can be identified as having been born about 1620, in Cologne. He was most likely of German ancestry, and may have been called early in life by the name, Adolf Brouwer.²⁷ He was unable to sign his name and thus not formerly educated, therefore was born into a less privileged household. Despite his low beginnings, he was able to build a significant mill business which provided for a large family. There is no evidence that would allow us to conclude that either Frans Sijmonszen Brouwer, or Pieter Clementszen Brouwer, was his father. Adam Brouwer’s parents have not been identified and a search for them should begin with the church registers at Cologne.²⁸

²⁶ It must also be noted that this was the period in time, when the early New Netherlands families who had been accustomed to the patronymic naming system, were being pressured by the English Government to choose a “permanent” surname. This would have been an ideal time for Adam to “christen” his family with a name of his own.

²⁷ In the German language it might be *Brauer*, but Prof. Frijhoff points out that in Cologne a Low German was spoken, so his name may have been spelled as *Brouwer*.

²⁸ A search, in late June, 2008 of the Ref. Dutch Church, Cologne records, Nederlands Hervormde Kerk. Coln, *Kirchenbuch, 1571-1803* (FHL film #0187154) did not find any mention of a Brouwer family. The entries appear to be complete for the years 1616 thru 1630, although it is noticed that there are very few entries for each year, indicating a small Dutch congregation in Cologne at this time. A search of the German Ref. Church, as well as the many Catholic Churches in Cologne is ongoing.